

Massacre

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Category: Law and Order: SVU
Genre: Family, Romance
Language: English
Characters: O. Benson, R. Barba
Status: Completed
Published: 2016-04-12 01:38:38
Updated: 2016-04-12 01:38:38
Packaged: 2016-04-27 19:34:17
Rating: K
Chapters: 1
Words: 868

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

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****A/N:**** Just some fun Barson fluff. With some Noah cuteness addedâ€¦ think 6-8 months in the future with Barson being fully established.

Opening his apartment door to the smell of dinner and the sounds of Noah giggling in the living room gave Rafael a warm feeling. Court had been appalling. His case was based on a he said-she said debacle that was quickly losing steam as the vast majority of his evidence was refuted or thrown out. It wasn't SVU's fault, he had to remind himself. Olivia had even voiced her concern about not pleading the case out.

But the victim had been tortured long enough and had reminded him so much of his girlfriend that Rafael couldn't keep himself from taking it as far as he could. It was a mistake. An emotionally fueled mistake that was resulting in late nights going over evidence, a snippy demeanor with the entire squad that was trying to back him,

and shoddy performances in court.

It was clearly taking its toll.

Shedding his jacket, however, he found himself pleased with his Friday night, even if he was exhausted. He left his shoes and briefcase by the door, suit jacket dropped on a coat hook as he rolled up the salmon colored sleeves of his shirt and he moved to sit on the floor behind the toddler watching Cars for what he could only assume was the fifth night in a row. They had watched it earlier in the week and Olivia had texted Rafael daily pictures of him being enthralled by it.

He reached around for the sippy cup that was knocked over, his legs spreading wide as Noah leaned against him.

"Liv, where are you?" He called out, setting the cup upright and examining its contents. It appeared to only be water " which Rafael was thankful for. He understood that dating a woman who had a three-year-old was likely to mean spills and messes in his home, too, but the next time chocolate milk or grape juice made its way onto his carpet was going to be a breaking point. It was a silly pet peeve, but he had made so few demands about having Noah over.

In fact, he had been the one to suggest they child-proof his living space. They spent so much time in her home, but he had more space. He'd even offered to set up an extra room for Noah so she could stay with him if she needed " if the nightmares took over and her own apartment made her too claustrophobic. It was a rare occurrence. They were far enough out from Lewis that she usually did fine, but there were still nights that were simply too much.

Besides, the dark beverages were fine at the table. They had all come to agree on it.

He heard a quiet snuffle as his only answer. Leaning forward, Rafael kissed the top of Noah's head, leaving him to the movie again. Noah barely seemed to notice Rafael's presence or lack-there-of.

Following the sound of Olivia's gentle cry took him to the kitchen and he tilted his head to the side. Tears flowed easily down her cheeks as she stood, both hands pressed firmly against the top of the counter as she seemingly attempted to contain herself. Rafael felt his breath catch in his throat as he quickly moved toward her, his prior frustrations lost as he tried to figure out what might have happened.

"_Mi amor,"_he whispered, arms quickly wrapping around her as he pulled her away from the counter. Rafael experienced tunnel vision as he forced Olivia to face him, one hand gripping her hip as the other found its way to her face, thumb gently wiping away each tear. "It's all right. Tell me what happened?"

Initially, Olivia refused to make eye contact with him, worrying Rafael even further. The world moved in slow motion before a soft laugh escaped her lips, the tears still present. Yet, something in the air seemed lighter.

"Olivia?"

"I was trying to surprise you with dinner," she stated through her own amusement. "But the onionsâ€¦"

Rafael looked away from her, seeing the cutting board with an onion chopped only a third of the way, knife abandoned beside it. He let out a breath he didn't even know he'd been holding before laughing, too.

"Let's just order Thai tonight, all right?" He offered lightheartedly, leaning forward to steal a kiss from his love.

"I'd much prefer pizza," Olivia countered, her eyes playful â€" though still red as an after effect from the great onion massacre.

Rafael nodded, taking her hand and leading her from the kitchen, "With extra cheese."

End
file.